

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY H. WEBB.

Volume IV.

BLOOMSBURG, COLUMBIA COUNTY, PA. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1840.

Number 23.

OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRAT,  
OPPOSITE ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, MAIN-ST.

## TERMS:

The COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT will be published every Saturday morning, at TWO DOLLARS per annum, payable half yearly in advance, or Two Dollars Fifty Cents, if not paid within the year. No subscription will be taken for a shorter period than six months; nor any discontinuance permitted, until all arrearages are discharged.

ADVERTISEMENTS not exceeding a square will be conspicuously inserted at One Dollar for the first three insertions, and Twenty-five cents for every subsequent insertion. A liberal discount made to those who advertise by the year. LETTERS addressed on business, must be post paid.

## POLITICAL.

PITTSBURG, 13th August, 1840.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, DAVID R. PORTER.

DEAR SIR:—The subscribers, your fellow citizens of the Democratic party, embrace this opportunity of your arrival in Pittsburg, to express their satisfaction of the course of policy pursued since you assumed the administration of the state government, and to congratulate you on the extension of those great principles that distinguish the Democracy of Pennsylvania.

When you assumed the administration of the affairs of the Commonwealth, every thing tended to evince the utter insecurity which must result to a democracy whenever a state is induced to place power in the hands of those unworthy to wield it.

You found the commonwealth brought to the verge of ruin—her financial operations mismanaged through ignorance, and misdirected through fraud—the grossest violation of the election franchise committed by the party in power for the purpose of retaining the possession of the government in defiance of the public will. The official authority vested in public servants for the protection of the people converted into an engine of stupendous mischief, and applied with a spirit of utter recklessness to defraud members of the Legislature, elected by large majorities, of their seats—to the introduction of armed bands in the halls of legislation, for the purpose of producing by force, what fraud and bold villainy, had been found too impotent to perform; and in fine, of subverting the great elements of the constitution itself.

You found, Sir, the Treasury empty—the public works in a state of ruin and dilapidation—the public faith violated—the credit of the Commonwealth rapidly sinking and no provision made for rescuing the state from the ruin of general bankruptcy. You found the very sources of power corrupted, and in hands of a feeble executive officer, surrounded by advisers who had become the panders of the banking institutions of the commonwealth, and who exhausted their energies in endeavoring to render the people of Pennsylvania the tributaries and ignoble slaves of an incorporated and irresponsible moneyed power.

Assuming the administration under such unpropitious circumstances, not only the democracy of Pennsylvania but that of the nation at large, looked with anxious solicitude to the wisdom, prudence and patriotism of your character for relief. In this we are happy to say, they were not disappointed.

The banking institutions have been brought to acknowledge the supremacy of the people; and the time fixed for the resumption of specie payments, although more remote than that recommended by you and desired by many of your fellow citizens, approximates to that medium, which at the same time it will prevent any calamity to the public, will test the solvency of the institutions themselves—at a period at which, if they do not permanently resume the discharge of their obligations, they will sink never again to rise.

The refusal to sanction the incorporation of new banking institutions has satisfied the people that the sentiments of the democratic party in relation to these fearful engines of corruption are duly appreciated by your Excellency, and will thoroughly imbue the policy of your administration.

The repairs of the public works—the activity and intelligence of the agents employed in conducting the business upon them, the increasing revenue derived from them notwithstanding the embarrassments of trade—the wisdom exhibited in the extension of the improvements necessary to bring into full operation the works heretofore commenced; together with the energy, with which those improvements have been prosecuted, form an era in the history of the commonwealth, the importance of which is attributable to your foresight alone. But the crowning act of your administration, that in which your patriotism is equalled only by your appreciation of the public intelligence, is your recommendation to resort to taxation for the purpose of discharging the public debt and maintaining inviolate the plighted faith of the commonwealth.

In urging this measure, you proved that you were not unworthy of the party that brought you into office—that you fully understood the ability of the people to comprehend its necessity, and the public virtue that was willing to submit to taxation for the purpose of rescuing the drowning honors of the state, and rendering the faith of the commonwealth as imperishable as her democracy is patriotic. By this one act, her sinking energies have been restored—her credit sustained, and her ability to continue her improvements rendered certain.

The recommendations so ardently urged by you for the restrictions of the banking institutions, will we trust, be duly appreciated and promptly acted on by future Legislature.

Whilst the acts of your administration have so eminently tended to rescue us from impending calamity, they have had the effect also of increasing our numbers of confirming the faith of the democratic party, giving us assurance of success in the great national conflict about to take place with the bitter and vindictive enemies of the people's rights. Your policy, Sir, as it insures democratic success in our local elections, so it creates the highest confidence in the choice of electors favorable to the claims of that eminent and patriotic statesman, Martin Van Buren.

As you have succeeded in important measures of state policy, we may be permitted to congratulate you and the public, upon the ultimate success of that great democratic measure, the Sub-Treasury system—a measure sanctioned by repeated manifestations of public will, and terminating the hopes of our opponents, of ever again imposing upon the country the curse of a national Bank. A measure that may be deemed a new *Magna charta* of the independent and industrious citizens, and an utter prostration of the designs of those who heretofore, fed and fattened upon public calamity and an irredeemable currency, a measure that addresses itself to the "sober second thought of the people" of this union, and which will insure to us a signal triumph at the coming Presidential contest.

The above suggestions are in unison with the sentiments of the great mass of your democratic fellow citizens of Pittsburg and which as a committee acting under their appointment, we have been instructed to submit to you.

And we have been further requested to invite you to a public entertainment to be given in testimony of their respect and personal esteem; and of their confidence in you as the chief executive of this commonwealth.

With sentiments of high regard

We remain your Excellency's,

Friends and fellow citizens.

Charles Shaler, Wm. Wilkins,  
R. C. Grier, Thos. Scott,  
Jas. Gray, (4th st.) Benj. Patton, jr.  
Wm. Porter, G. W. Jackson,

Rody Patterson,  
David Lynch,  
Jas. A. Gibson,  
A. Carnahan,  
Wm. Kerr,  
R. C. Townsend,  
Dennis Leonard,  
G. R. White,  
P. McKenna,  
James S. Craft,

GOVERNOR PORTER'S REPLY.  
HARRISBURG, 24th August, 1840.

GENTLEMEN:—

Previously to my departure from Pittsburg, I had the honor to receive yours of the 13th inst., inviting me on behalf of "the great mass of my democratic fellow-citizens of Pittsburg and vicinity, to partake of a public entertainment to be given in testimony of their respect and personal esteem, and of their confidence in me as the Chief Magistrate of the commonwealth." I regret that prior engagements and absence from the seat of Government for a considerable period precluded the possibility of my remaining longer in Pittsburg. I have been indeed so pressed for time that I have not had an opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of your letter, until my arrival at this place. I beg you to accept my sincere thanks for this manifestation of approbation on the part of my democratic fellow citizens of Pittsburg and its vicinity, and to assure those whom you represent, how gratifying to my feelings, is their favorable opinion of my public conduct.

You have not overrated, gentlemen, the difficulties with which I have had to contend. I took occasion, in a late letter to my democratic friends of Philadelphia to refer to them, and I cannot forbear now to repeat, that those difficulties called on me for the exercise of all the ability and all the firmness with which it has pleased God to endow me. Surrounded on all sides with embarrassments, I was constrained by circumstances to adopt that course which seemed to be beset with the least; and I am sorry to say, during the darkest period of those embarrassments, there seemed to be a want of cordial support, and mainly assumption of responsibility on the part of the co-ordinate branches of the Government, to whom as well as to myself, the people had entrusted the management of their public affairs.

Every rational man knows that you cannot elect, or change governments in a day. Mistake and abuses of half a century in taking root, cannot be extirpated at a single blow; and when intimately blended with our business and public interests as the banking institutions of this Commonwealth have been, the evil must be examined and corrected with great caution and skill. Remedies are often suggested, that a first glance appear sound and complete, but upon a more thorough consideration, are quite as bad as the evils they are designed to cure. When men are responsible to the public for all the results of measures that they recommend or approve, it is doubly incumbent on them not to be misled by hasty counsel, or false appearances. They are sworn to weigh things well, and to act according to the dictates of their best judgment, perfectly fearless of all that human power can do against them. Impressed with this, as the paramount obligation of my official duty, I have both done and refrained from doing various things on which a diversity of sentiment prevailed, among my political friends and supporters; and frankly and fully submitting my reasons to my fellow citizens, have relied on their candor and sense of justice, to vindicate my course. My confidence in my fellow citizens has been more than realized. They have appreciated the obstacles in my way, and have made ample allowance for the peculiar circumstances in which the people of the commonwealth and its Executive have been placed. I am sure there is but little real difference of opinion among the various members of the democratic party on the great subjects of public policy that have occupied the attention of the people for several years past. There

may be differences of opinion, it is true, as to details, but, upon the essential principles involved, we all think very much alike.—How idle and unreasonable would it be then to ask of our neighbor, to agree with us implicitly, in all the minute details of a system when we see alike in relation to every fundamental principle of which it consisted? And how absurd and unjust would it be, to impugn his motives and denounce his conduct, because he could not recognize in our opinion the only infallible standard of perfection? Were this otherwise, it would be induced a social tyranny of the most grinding and insupportable kind. It would destroy at once that freedom of opinion which is not only the glory of our republican institutions, but the very life and soul of their existence. God forbid that the day should ever arrive in this country, when the most exalted individual in power may say to the humblest, "I am the standard of infallibility—agree with me in all things, or be branded as a recreant and a knave—stand off from the altar of patriotism—I am holier than thou." I freely concede to every man the right to form such opinions upon public men, as he sees fit, and to act upon the best dictates of his judgment in supporting them. I claim as reciprocal right the same privilege and shall exercise it, as I have hitherto done, and I shall continue to rely on the intelligence and integrity of my fellow citizens to sustain me. I know that a public officer, who can bare his very heart to the public scrutiny, with a consciousness of rectitude of intention, has nothing to apprehend from the people. That scrutiny I cheerfully invite—it cannot be instituted too often, or too rigidly applied to the conduct of public functionaries.

I hope gentlemen, not to be misunderstood. These remarks are not designed to be applicable to any particular class of individuals, if in fact any can be found, who might feel disposed to appropriate them to themselves. They are made for the sole purpose of explaining my own views of the course it becomes me to pursue under such circumstances as have been indicated, and I have not yet seen any just cause to depart from them, on any occasion.

You have been pleased to refer with approbation, to my recommendation of a tax for the support of the credit and the honor of the Commonwealth, as well as for the completion of the unfinished works of improvement. It affords me pleasure to receive such testimonials of commendation from those who among others are to bear the burthen of this imposition. I felt conscious of the peril I encountered in making this recommendation to the legislature, but in fact there was no other available alternative. The debt was already incurred—the improvements finished or undertaken—we were but indirectly responsible for providing for the necessity which we had not produced, and it was simply a question of, whether the plighted faith of the State should be redeemed or violated. As a man of honor, as the Executive of a high-minded and honorable people, I could not hesitate. I cheerfully suggested a measure, in the burden of which, with my fellow-citizens, I was to take a share. I regretted as sincerely as any one, its necessity, but regret however great, could not justify a failure to perform my official duty.

You have been pleased also to refer with approbation to my recommendations for the reform of the Banking System; to my opposition to the increase of the number of banks; and to the certainty now afforded, that the banks of the commonwealth will resume specie payments on the day fixed by the resolution, or "sink never to rise again."

I deeply regret that the commendations which I made to the legislature in my annual message at the opening of the last session, for the reformation of our vicious system of banking, were not adopted. Had they been, I believe much good would have resulted to the public, but as it is, I can do no more than to renew them, as I shall do, and urge them upon the attention of the next legislature. My views on the subject

of increasing the present number of banks, are fully set forth in my veto of "the Lancaster Loan Company Bank." I believe they have been very generally approved by my fellow-citizens; and I will here take occasion to say, that as the banking capital of this commonwealth had been INCREASED about \$40,000,000 within three years immediately before my induction into office, I cannot perceive the slightest necessity for any further augmentation. While I continue to be entrusted with the executive functions, I shall not yield my assent to any increase of our banking capital, but on the contrary, if any change on this subject be made, I think it should be to reduce the overgrown, amount already existing.

So far as relates to the resumption of specie payments, I have already in the letter above referred to addressed to my democratic friends of Philadelphia, stated that the period fixed in the resolutions as they finally passed, was more remote than I thought expedient; but as the *time*, (provided it was reasonable,) was not a matter of principle, and as I considered some definite and speedy legislation indispensable, I sanctioned the resolutions. Had I defeated the adoption of those resolutions, I apprehended the banks would be too potent to allow of the passage of others, more reasonable, if indeed any others, could have been passed. I signed them as the least of two evils.—This is not the first law I have sanctioned for the same reasons, and no man in his senses can expect the executive branch of the government, which merely approves of what is done by its two co-ordinates, to have every measure precisely its own way. I have exercised the veto power without hesitation whenever I considered a question of principle, or of vital public policy concerned, but not in cases of less import.

As I considered the suspension of specie payments extended to a longer time than was necessary, I shall not sanction any further extension. If the banks cannot meet their engagements on the 15th of January next, it will be a serious misfortune, but it is one, in the production of which I have had no share, and for the consequences of which I shall feel no official responsibility. The banks themselves must answer for the result; for it must be perfectly obvious to the world, that any bank which cannot then resume, with such notice and indulgence, will never be able to resume at all.

You have also been pleased to notice in connection with my name, that of our distinguished President, and likewise that great measure of his administration the Independent Treasury. My favorable opinion both of him and of the Independent Treasury Bill was fully and frankly expressed in my Inaugural address and my late annual message to the legislature. It was made up on reflection, and has been strengthened by the occurrences almost daily taking place. I may further add, that as the Independent Treasury is now the law of the land, and in full operation, time will soon demonstrate its salutary tendencies, and I have no doubt, prove that its friends have not been mistaken in their anticipations of benefits to arise from it.

The banks had by their own act of suspension in 1837, shown their incapacity to perform the functions of fiscal agents of the Government. With \$15,000,000 in their vaults, of the public moneys, the government was compelled to borrow funds to carry on its operations. With what justice therefore, can they or their friends complain of the government, (having already suffered so deeply by their delinquency,) for attempting to provide a safer and better method of keeping and disbursing the money belonging to the people?

I have thus, gentlemen, hastily, but with candor expressed my views on several of the leading topics embraced in your letter of invitation. Whatever may be the opinion of some others, as to the right of the people to ask of candidates for high office and of persons occupying official stations, what are their views, on great subjects of policy affecting the prospects and interests of the public, and as to the duty of such